



NEWS RELEASE

Hawaii District Office

Release Date: Immediate
Release Number: DO 04-12

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SBA HONORS 2004 HAWAII'S TOP SMALL BUSINESSES

HONOLULU, HI - The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced the winners of the 2004 SBA Small Business Awards for the State of Hawaii. Following a rigorous selection process, the honors are awarded to top performing, innovative small business owners, entrepreneurs and advocates who have a track record of successfully managing the challenges of running a business in today's fast changing economic environment.

Peter Robson and Randy Finlay, owners of Unlimited Construction Services, Inc., were selected from a highly competitive field of candidates as the outstanding **Small Business Persons of the Year for the State of Hawaii in 2004**. Based on Kauai, Unlimited specializes in resort, commercial, multi-residential, and industrial projects. The company has experienced continuous growth in revenue, profits, and jobs over the past several years and is now the largest general contractor on Kauai.

Top small business owners were also named for the neighbor islands, including **Gerald and Wendy Yamada, G. W. Construction** of Hilo for the Big Island; **Michael Fox of Hawaii Modular Space, Inc.** in Kapolei for Oahu, and **Clyde and Glenn Hamai of Hamai Appliances, Inc.** for Maui.

Virginia Cho, owner of Campus Music in Kailua-Kona, was named Small Business Exporter for the State of Hawaii for 2004. **Thomas Reed IV of Oceanic Imaging Consultants,**

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Inc. took the Exporter of the Year honors for Oahu.

The SBA Awards also recognize advocates for their efforts to support small businesses through services and assistance to minorities, women, and veterans as well as to improve conditions through access to financial services, resources and information.

Top honors for the **Financial Services Advocate of 2004** were awarded to **Rann Watumull of Bank of Hawaii for Region IX and the State of Hawaii**, to **Larry L. Anderson of Fiducial** for Oahu, and to **Sharron Courter, CPA**, for Maui. **Robin Danner, president of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement**, was named the **2004 Minority Small Business Advocate for Region IX and the State of Hawaii** while **George Toyama, owner of General Trades & Services, Inc.**, won for the island of Oahu, **Judith Fox-Goldstein of UH Hilo Conference Center and EDventure** for the Big Island and **Cielo Molina of the State Department of Taxation** for Maui. Recognized as the **State's 2004 Women in Business Advocate** is **Phoebe Lambeth of Hawaii Island Radiation Oncology, Ltd.** This advocacy award was also presented to County winners **Dr. Tyrie Lee Jenkins** on Oahu, **Jeanne Skog of Maui Economic Development Board on Maui**, and **Geri Gallagher of Hale Kauai, Ltd.** on Kauai.

For professional efforts to inform the public about the important role of small business in the local economy, advocacy awards are presented to both journalists and researchers. **Cathy S. Cruz of Pacific Basin Communications and the Downtown Planet** was named the **2004 Small Business Journalist for the State of Hawaii**. Sharing the honors at the county level are **Rick Blangiardi, Emmis Communications** on Oahu and **Jim Wilson, formerly with the Hawaii Tribune Herald**, on Hawaii. For individuals using research to assist small business development in Hawaii, **Ruth Corn of the Hawaii Small Business Development Center Business Research Library** on Maui took the State award while **Pearl Imada-Iboshi of DBEDT's** research arm is

the Oahu advocate and **George Yokoyama of Hawaii County Economic Development Council** represents the Big Island.

The winners will be honored at the **17th Annual Statewide Small Business Awards Luncheon** on April 28, 2004, at the Sheraton Waikiki Resort. Preceding the luncheon at 11:00 a.m., the “Winner’s Circle”, an exciting exhibit that focuses on the products, services and unique achievements of the outstanding small business honorees, will be open to the public. The luncheon and awards presentations will begin promptly at noon . **Kim Gennaula**, news anchor for KGMB 9, will serve as the emcee of the event along with SBA District Director Andy Poepoe. The cost for the luncheon is \$38 per seat or \$360 for a table of ten.

The annual awards event is cosponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, Small Business Hawaii, the Hawaii Women’s Business Center, and SBA. For information or reservations for the 2004 Small Business Awards Luncheon, contact the SBA at 541-2990 or the Hawaii Women’s Business Center at 522-8136. Advance reservations are required and will be accepted until April 21, 2004.

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For more information on Surety Bond Guarantee Program, the HUBZone Program and other SBA programs, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK-SBA, or visit the SBA’s extensive website at www.sba.gov.

The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government’s disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses. America’s 24 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation’s gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.

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